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ABSTRACT

One of a series of 20 literary magazine profiles written to help faculty advisors wishing to start or improve their publication, this profile provides information on staffing and production of "Literary Harvest," the magazine published by Ogden High School, Ogden, Utah. The introduction describes the literary magazine contest (and criteria), which was sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English and from which the 20 magazines were chosen. The remainder of the profile--based on telephone interviews with the advisor, the contest entry form, and the two judges' evaluation sheets--discusses (1) the magazine format, including paper and typestyles; (2) selection and qualifications of the students on staff, as well as the role of the advisor in working with them; (3) methods used by staff for acquiring and evaluating student submissions; (4) sources of funding for the magazine, including fund raising activities if applicable, and production costs; and (5) changes and problems occurring during the advisor's tenure, and anticipated changes. The May 1984 issue of the magazine is appended. (HTH)

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AN EXEMPLARY HIGH SCHOOL LITERARY MAGAZINE: LITERARY HARVEST

Compiled by

Hilary Taylor Holbrook

INTRODUCTION

In 1984, the National Council of Teachers of English began a national competition to recognize student literary magazines from senior high, junior high, and middle schools in the United States, Canada, and the Virgin Islands. Judges in the state competitions for student magazines were appointed by state leaders who coordinated the competition at the state level.

The student magazines were rated on the basis of their literary quality (imaginative use of language; appropriateness of metaphor, symbol, imagery; precise word choice; rhythm, flow of language), types of writing included (poetry, fiction, nonfiction, drama), quality of editing and proofreading, artwork and graphic design (layout, photography, illustrations, typography, paper stock, press work), and frontmatter and pagination (title page, table of contents, staff credits). Up to 10 points were also either added for unifying themes, cross-curricular involvement, or other special considerations, or subtracted in the case of a large percentage of outside professional and/or faculty involvement.

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In the 1984 competition, 290 literary magazines received ratings of "Above average," 304 were rated "Excellent," and 44 earned "Superior" ratings from state contest judges. On the basis of a second judging, 20 of the superior magazines received the competition's "Highest Award."

As a special project, the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills has selected 20 magazines from those receiving "Superior" ratings to serve as models for other schools wishing to start or improve their own student literary magazines. The profiles of these magazines are based on the faculty advisor's contest entry sheet, the judges' evaluation sheets, and interviews with the faculty advisors. Where possible, the magazines themselves have been appended. Information for ordering copies of the magazines is contained at the end of each profile.

LITERARY HARVEST '84

Ogden High School

Ogden, Utah

Principal: Lee Bybee

1984 Faculty Advisor: Brad Roghaar

Current Faculty Advisor: Margaret Rostkowski

Student Editors: Karen Packard, Lynda Scritchfield, Stan Smith, Brad Wooden, Don Dodenbier, Jennifer Eason, Katy Frandsen, Oksana Oogosha, and Brian Hyer

"Literary Harvest is a magazine of long tradition at Ogden High School, one in which the school takes great pride." --Brad Roghaar, 1984 Faculty Advisor--

Ogden High School is a four-year public school located in the northern Utah city of Ogden, a predominately white collar community of approximately 67,000 residents. The majority of the school's 1,400 students come from professional backgrounds and are of the Mormon faith, but Ogden also has a high southwestern Indian and Hispanic population. The school has published its literary magazine under its current name since 1940, and published several magazines under different names before then.

FORMAT

Margaret Rostkowksi, the magazine's current faculty advisor, notes that the magazine underwent several format changes during

its early years before arriving at its present title and format. The 1984 edition contains 72 pages, is center-stapled, and measures 10" x 7" wide. Printed on charcoal grey linen cover stock, the magazine cover is illustrated with a wraparound drawing of a horned owl. A smaller drawing of an owl appears again inside the back cover. The magazine title appears in 30 point display type, framed by two solid black lines which run over onto the insides of the covers and the frontmatter pages. Inside the cover is a solid black card stock insert, half page in front, full page in back.

The text is printed on off-white linen paper, from Elite typewritten camera copy. The artwork, much of which is framed with solid black borders, includes drawings in pencil and in ink, photographs, and scratchboard works. Additional illustrations complement some of the writing.

PRODUCTION: BALANCE

The 1984 editors and advisor, Brad Roghaar, tried to strike a balance between professional production and student involvement in the project, opting for a publication that was less costly than some and totally student-produced. All of the writing and artwork is submitted by students, and students on the staff do all the editing, design and paste-up, and 50 percent of the proofreading. Students also printed the magazine with the help of workers in the district's print shop.

As the 1984 advisor, Mr. Roghaar regarded his role as one of consultant. All decision making was done by the students, and he expressed confidence in their judgment. Students in the creative

writing classes, primarily juniors and seniors, are invited by the advisor to participate on the staff. Effort is made to recruit students of varying backgrounds and personalities, and Ms. Rostowski notes that writing ability and dependability are also qualities the advisor looks for when selecting potential staff. Editors are selected either by the advisor or by staff vote.

For a few weeks during the late winter/early spring months, the 15 or so staff members are excused from a class period to meet with the advisor and discuss criteria for evaluating submissions. During actual production of the magazine, the staff meets in the evenings and on weekends. The current advisor hopes to implement a separate production course in the next year or two.

SUBMISSIONS: MATURITY

Students in the creataive writing classes at Ogden High are encouraged by their instructors to submit writing for publication, and, according to Ms. Rostkowski, students are very much aware of the magazine. There is no shortage of submissions--three times as many as the staff can publish.

Most of the submissions have been polished during peer interaction in the creative writing classrooms, whether the works are generated by class assignments or are students' personal writing. Many submissions come from students not enrolled in creative writing classes, but often these works do not pass the qualitative evaluations. The bulk of the magazine is comprised of poems, and Mr. Roghaar has observed a certain maturity in the

students' poetry, due in part to the creative writing classes. Ogden High School also has a strong foreign language program, and Literary Harvest encourages bilingual works. The 1984 issue contained two pieces in Spanish; the 1985 issue included French language work.

Staff members are trained in developing evaluation criteria before selection of works begins. Works are evaluated and selected without the authors' names. Mr. Roghaar observed that the Literary Harvest was not an elitist publication and that the editors selections were representative of everyone who submitted, although Ms. Rostowski acknowledges that selections are not always based solely on literary merit. Occasionally, the advisor will ask that the editors take a second look at a promising work that they have previously rejected.

FUNDING: ON A SHOESTRING

Approximately 25 percent of the funding for Literary Harvest comes from the school budget; the remaining 75 percent comes from sales of past issues. No outside advertising or donations are accepted. The 1984 issue was produced at a cost of $2.00 per copy for a print run of 300, and sells for $2.00 each.

Because the magazine is printed at the district print shop, by students, from typewritten camera-ready copy, typesetting and printing costs are considerably reduced. The costly paper used for the 1984 edition, however, brought expenses to approximately $1,000, somewhat over budget.

CHANGES: A SMOOTH TRANSITION

Although Ms. Rostkowski had not worked on the magazine with Mr. Roghaar before taking over as advisor for the 1985 edition, she has made few changes in the production process, and the transition has been a smooth one. Now in her second year as advisor, she notes that "the most difficult part is choosing" the materials that will go into the magazine, but that the staff members are getting better at evaluating submitted works.

For the 1987 edition, Ms. Rostowski anticipates implementing a literary magazine course to replace the time spent after school hours, a change she is looking forward to. Artwork is another area of expected change. The media that are reproducible in black and white print are limited, so the balance between submitted works and illustrations by staff members will tend to shift toward the latter.

During its history, Literary Harvest has undergone changes in format and leadership--the 1984 edition was Mr. Roghaar's second issue, and Ms. Rostkowski is currently working on her third edition--but still maintains its long history a creative student-produced magazine, perhaps the richer for these changes.

**

Copies of Literary Harvest can be obtained from

Ogden High School

2830 Harrison Blvd.

Ogden, UT 84403

Price: $2.00 (plus postage)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Literary Harvest
Ogden High School
Volume 45
May 1984

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Katy Frandsen
Oksana Gogosha
Brian Hyer
Karen Packard-Art
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"BEAVER TAIL" (pencil, 8 1/2" x 11 1/2") Karen Packard

IN MY OWN IMAGE

With my eyes I change the tide.
It ebbs a current of blinding wakes,
unchanged, untamed,
Reflecting back at me
raw uncut emeralds
encased in golden sands.

With my breath, I send the wind
through adamant forests,
rippling leaves like silver coins
over strong, masculine limbs,
gentle enough to put
butterflies in my chest.

With a shiver, I entwine every river,
Young and restless,
feeding the healthy land
like the explosive blood
in my veins.

With the tip of my finger
I melt stubborn clouds,
scattering raindrops to clear the air,
Expressionless in my fury
and abstract, mysterious
in my grasp.

In the distance
I blaze
wild, unpredictable.
But I am only a
woman
exciting myself
on a whim.

- Jennifer Eason

LONELY APATHY

When I see
(once again)
someone slipping from
the sun
and falling into the thunder
and the rain.

And when I see
(once again)
someone climbing out
and the winds come
pushing them back.

I begin to wonder
(once again)
why we bother
to even think
of loving one another.

- Connie Stevenson

FLOWERS AND CHILDREN

The sun beats down on the sinewy sunflower;
It clings stubbornly to the hard packed soil.
Dew drenched violets and asters cover the hillside;
They are like fairy bowers.

A winged gargoyle sits in the garden fountain;
It is covered with multi-colored moss.

The rambler rose drops her sweet scented petals;
The dandelion his white, puffy seeds.
Children string them all on twine;
They pretend to own the diamond and pearl beads.

- Leaha Trombley

HAIKU

Delicate flower
She opens herself to me
Making her life mine.

- Oksana Gogosha

RAGGED AMBITION

As I sit, someone shuffles;
the atmosphere around me breaks.
Nervous tension released on white lines
with lead that is as dark
as before diamonds are diamonds--
dark, like secrets of a mind--
dark, like the corners of the room
that are so, not only from shadow,
but form the years of ambition
that were shot toward the stars
for the chance of success.

Again someone shuffles.
The blackness of the chalkboard
whispers to me the lessons of only
yesterday, muffled by the trail
of an eraser.
Ambition,
drowned out by
barking white symbols.

Outside I see the slight shudder
of a ragged flag in the wind--
Limp, but not from age.

- Jennifer Eason

HISTORY

History is only
a myth
created to try
to explain
why things are
the way they are.
Its stories are interesting
and have much to teach,
but they never really happened.
The world didn't exist
until I was born.

- Stan Smith

"LIFE IN AMERICA" (pencil, 18" x 24") Don Dodenbier

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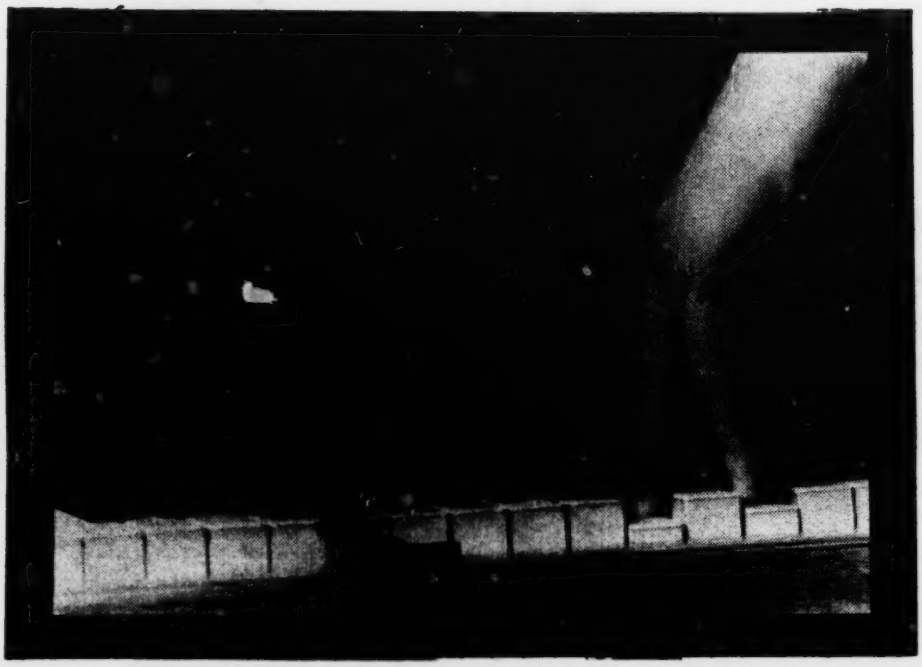

"MUSIC PIECE" (photograph, 7" x 5") Stan Smith

THE RECITAL

forever reviewing and repeating
practicing for the recital
that only happens once

my heart
hands
and feet
turn cold
all tremble without me

the fingers fumble
and the keyboard
groans disgustingly

time is not wasted
I still become
better

- Allison Sampson

AMBITION

Blocks stacked high
with infinite care.
Jonathan builds
to prove he's been there.
ASHES,
ASHES,
They all fall down!

- Stephanie Larsen

THE BIG WASTE

Primed
Young
Virile
Full of a new and dangerous fluid
Shakily walking around
For me there is no outlet
The precious fluid
Bottled in a glass decanter
Use to do great things
Use it to reach new heights
Of personal, personal experience
Sure
And see it blow up
So fast, so complete
And self-destructing
Just gone
Before you know it
I've seen it do just that

You know
The special moment
When above all else
You know what happens next
Like before the explosion
The creaking second before
You know

I think
I think
I'm

- Brad Wooden

SOLITUDE

The days of pain
In which I live
Crash down from
Thunderous life within.

The days of joy
With love I see
Crash down from
Tremendous sorrows.

But all my days
Will soon crash down
And with them all
My pain will end.

- Pat Thornton

DO I REALLY MATTER?

I walk along the beach
My footprints in the sand
Follow after me.

The sea touches the sand
Erasing the only sign
Of my presence there.

I continue to walk
Listening to the waves break,
Watching them roll slowly in.

I stop walking and turn
To see my footprints being erased.
The answer -- I think not.

- Oksana Gogosha

S P A R K Y G O E S P U N K

by Robb Hall

Returning home from school is always a pleasant experience for me. I love to just lie on my bed, pet my pal Sparky and listen to some good, loud music. It all began on just such a day.

Closing the front door behind me, I headed for my room and some of that music. I noticed Syd, who my parents often refer to as "their second mistake." Syd was in the den, as usual, sitting next to the one thing in his life—the family television. There was a blue shadow cast on his face, and he had that usual dumbfounded look. Syd felt that to enable oneself to get the real effect of television, one must sit no more than three feet away from it. I saw no sense in saying hello to Syd, for Syd was in a tunnelvision, Bugs Bunny of course, and like Mom always says, "If the TV is on, then Syd is off."

I walked on past the den and headed downstairs. Walking down the stairs, I noticed the radio in my room was on full blast. I knew Syd was always the last to leave for school and the first to return home. I thought nothing of it, besides, a little music could be good for Syd. It certainly wasn't any worse than all of that television.

I cracked open the door and pushed it open until all of the room was visible. When I realized what had happened, I just about died. The whole room was under a red glow. My old, white light bulb had been replaced with a red one, and the "Punk Music" which was blaring from my stereo system really enhanced the mood. Have you ever heard "Punk Music"? It sounds like a bunch of pots and pans being thrown at crazed animals. Still in a state of shock, I noticed my two hundred dollar malemute dog. Once a purebred dog, he was now a purebred freak, a victim of a crazed "Punker."

Sparky was covered with purple strips and SUPER GLUE spikes. He wore a leather collar with two-inch, steel studs sticking out from it. The fact that Sparky was now the proud owner of a bright yellow "mohawk" really made me sick. After a brief moment of shock I killed the radio and the red light. I then sat down next to my very dejected dog. My momentary coma was interrupted by someone coming down the stairs; it was Syd. When he saw my dog he started laughing and informed me that Mom and Dad would really get a laugh out of this joke. I mouthed a few kind words to Syd and left without further adieu.

My parents did not enjoy the sight of my dog. They certainly did not show any affection for him. Mom just told me to keep an eye on Sparky because if he were to be picked up by the Humane Society, we could very easily receive a big fine.

The next morning I decided to clean my room. Actually it was my mother who decided for me. Usually I never really clean my little world, but that day I figured I would do a good job. Always having neglected to sweep under my bed, I decided to get crazy and clean out from under it. It was at that time that I made some very bizarre discoveries. I found a box that contained all of Sparky's hair clippings, bottles of asssorted dyes, punk eyeglasses, scissors, and a tiny earring shaped like a whip. This was too much fun for one kid to enjoy. I heard my mom coming down the stairs, so I tossed all of my new discoveries into the closet and acted normal.

Mom didn't even notice my clean room; she had other things on her mind. She informed me that the neighors had had a sneak preview of our family's new "Punk Pup." I could see by the expression on Mom's face that she was not proud of my dog anymore. She tightened up her face, shook her head and left the room. She was furious. Seconds later she popped her head into my room to inform me that nobody was to see my dog unless they were from the immediate family.

Later that evening I decided to head downtown to a low-rent house where a lot of the local "Punkers" hang out. When I arrived at my destination, I found that the music was not such a torture to my ears as I had figured it would be. As a matter of fact I rather enjoyed it. The house was very run-down and it had a very damp, dusty smell to it. There was a small room with broken furniture and broken windows. This was where all the "Punkers" danced. A small stereo in one corner of the room supplied all of the music, and assorted cans and bottles were thrown all around the room. I noticed a couple of guys beating each other. I was standing there trying to figure out why I had come, when suddenly I heard my voice called out from behind me. When I turned around I was face to face with a real fruit. He just looked at me for a moment; he spit on my foot and walked away. I guess I wasn't the guy he was looking for. It was getting late, so I headed for home.

The next day I was awakened by the early morning cartoons, Bugs Bunny of course. My room was cold, but my bed was warm. After a scene or two of Bugs, I pulled myself out of bed and headed outside to feed Sparky. I was dressed in a grey T-shirt, underwear, and a pair of thongs. I picked up the unopened bag of dog food that was by the door and stumbled towards Sparky and his empty dish. I tore open the bag and began to pour in Sparky's meal. I noticed a tiny object hanging from his left ear. I looked real close, and sure enough it was that little whip-shaped earring. Desperately I grabbed for the earring--big mistake. Sparky took off running and headed straight for the hole in our fence which led into the neighbor's yard. If that weren't enough, Sparky had to start barking and wake-up everyone. They sure got a kick and a good laugh out of Sparky then. I picked up the bag and set it down by the back door. I went back to bed.

After I got all snuggled-up, I began to take all the events which had happened in the last few days and put them into perspective. I had a lot of unanswered questions for myself. Why did that "Punker's" house seem so familiar, and why did that guy think I was someone else? Why was all of that stuff under my bed, and most of all, how could a

person roam around my house doing bizarre things to my dog and nobody ever see him? Could I be the man responsible? Could I be that crazed "Punker"? I calmed down and realized that I was getting all worked up over nothing.

I heard Syd coming down the stairs, and within moments he was in my room. It was at this time that Syd asked me a very disturbing question. Syd wanted to know why I was out in the back yard around four o'clock earlier that morning. I told Syd he was crazy and asked him politely to leave the room. Syd shook his head as if I were some sort of a weirdo; then he left. I thought about what he had said. It hit me that maybe I had slipped out to put that earring in Sparky's ear. No way, I thought. I went to sleep again.

Later I showered and began the big clean-up. I threw all of the nifty little things I had found under my bed in the garbage. I cut off Sparky's mohawk, bleached him white again, and threw that little earring in the trash compactor. Almost right away I began to feel good again. No more "Punk Pup."

I felt so good that I decided to take Syd and Sparky for a "slurpee" at a nearby 7-11. I heard the TV on, so naturally I knew where Syd could be found. When I got to the TV room, he wasn't there. I figured he might be in his room, so I took a look there. I opened the door and there sat Syd. He was holding bottle of purple dye, scissors, and Sam, the neighbor's Siamese cat.

* * * * *

HOW THINGS ARE

The wealthier the mouse
Untroubled with its ease
The further it consumes
This small chunk of cheese

Abandoned by integrity
They leave the ant
Struggling for survival
On this unfortunate plant

- Lisa Jones

NIGHT IN THE CATHEDRAL

Late at night
When only darkness
burns through panes
of colored glass
Then the yellowed varnish
will crack and break
to release the ancient wood
And the walls will ooze
to one sliding, seething mass
in the center of cold, grey floor
And the eyeless corpses
will sigh as one
and caress their prison walls
with hands of dust.

- David Fikstad

NIGHT VISITORS

My life stands still
when loss is
acknowledged.
Seemingly, centuries go by
with the loss not
thought of.
Good dreams flow through
my mind, yet
I'm wide awake.
Now, deep in the night and
when all alone, tears
fall on my pillow,
and you are my reason.
All at once,
well-kept secrets are
remembered--
but never told.
My eyes close and
the last tear falls with
all my memories.

- Adam Stevenson

GEORGIA GHOSTS

The smoke of the fire has not yet diminished;
The majestic Georgia plantation stands as still as
Death.
Walking down the abandoned hallways,
Elegant ghosts with hoop skirts fret
Daily about the size of their waists.
Deep, sounding music starts low in the ashed foundation.
Rising, the echoing strains drift through
The burned pillars -- the sound of chained spirits.
Dark skin drips the pains of abuse.
Raindrops in the soil, the sweat swirls and
Evaporates under the bright southern sun.
The chained shadows will always stand as still as
Death.

- Becky Bergeson

POND REFLECTIONS

He moves silently,
with not even a glance
in my direction.
Serene, undisturbed
by my studious attention,
He is satisfied to skim on the water
in gradual, effortless circles.
And I am left on the shore
wishing that ducks would give me
An easy answer.

- David Fikstad

TRANQUILITY TRANCE

Reaching out
to embrace you
The intensity engulfing
Your face
While the warmth lures
Your languid body into
A deep, dark, destination.

- Kristy Joynt

"PARANOID" Eric Peterson

NIGHTMARE

My mother's appearance has changed
Her hair is short and bobbed
The blue eyes are now a harsh black
Outlined with blue
Shoulders shrunk
Head down
She enters the room
With a tear in her eye
She tells me the news
That I already know.

- Lisa Stewart

THE SCULPTOR

It all begins
In a dark and cluttered studio
With a twisted mass of grey;
Its blankness leering from the dusty shadows.

My knife is poised above the clay
To cut the flesh from cold reality,
To shape it to my dream.
Sometimes it bleeds, sometimes not;
It is only what I will.
I press with aching fingers
The hollow eyes that soon begin to stare.

It all ends
In a dark and cluttered studio
With an artificial head
I do not recognize.

- David Fikstad

THE FOG

The fog is like a seaweed net
That never dissipates.
The fog makes the entire earth
As gray as sad people can be.

The fog can last forever
And drive the people crazy.
They try to huddle and hide
In the winter's cold.

- Charles Harrington

MUSEUM

The Architecture of Faces
falling
changing
yet always the same.
Designs
altered by words
or eyes.
Masterpieces
not of flesh, but
their own language,
their own life.
Hallways full of broken fantasies
individually framed,
and laughter
running like long yellow ribbons
in someone's hair.
The Architecture of Faces,
the true simplicity
of history.

- Karen Packard

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MORTIFIED TODAY

Oh, did I forget to say
That I was mortified today
By a reply which came by way
Of grisly chalkboard.

It seemed, or so, to say
That I'm a user all the way
When I extend with a "Petenay"
"A pitty doy!"
"Afaid ta say!"

Now you may not understand
My good humor (out of hand)
When I wax and do not sand
La, nonsensical
O' so grand!

But it was really the only way
This hooven beast could rise and bray
That he finds this "Petanie"
"A pretty girl."
"Though afraid to say."

I shouldn't have expected it to make sense
For who would give a rightly halfpence
About some jibberish
Chalked on badly
By a person
Seeming madly
To overdo himself
Rather sadly
His name being jerk, or Bradley.

I shouldn't be so repentful
But actually a sight resentful
T'ward whomever poured cementful
Around my ankles as a hopeful
'Er I her friend be, preventful
*By shoveling that *#%@ load lamentful*
And if you don't like squiggles portentful
Too bad.
That's what I meantful!

- Brad Wooden

THE SIREN

Opalescent pearls of dew
Upon her young red lips
Have driven many men to grief
And sunken many ships

Sitting on the jagged coast
She's calling out your name
Luring you to certain death
A maiden of ill-fame

A siren of the sea she is
Forever at her post
Singing out her song of doom
It's you she wants the most

- Vince Martinez

WATER

I rush down the hill
In my man-made chasm
Gathering tired leaves
And other forgotten debris.
With every snowflake
That silently falls,
I grow faster and deeper.
Until I run,
Screaming, down another distraction
Made by man.

- Kay Crandall

THE GNOMES

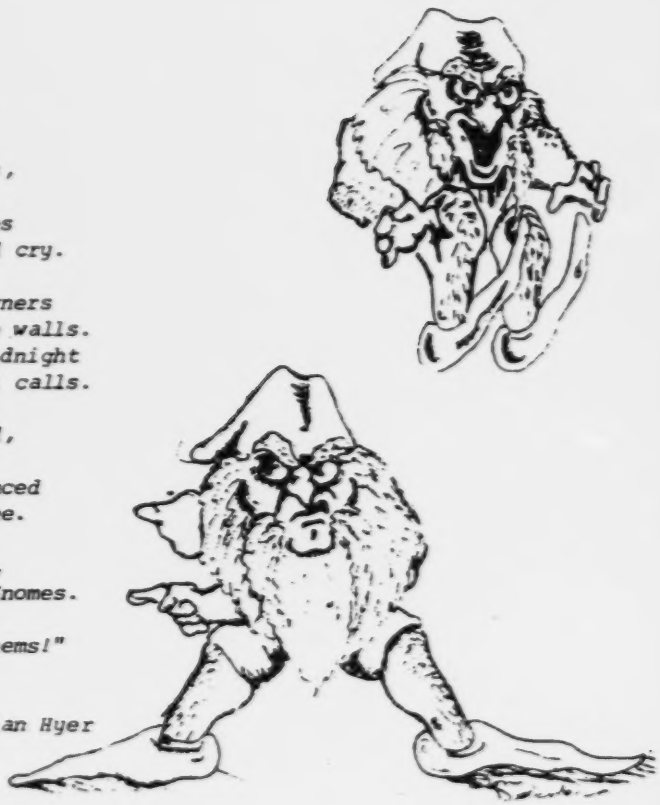
I can't write poems,
Although I try.
Words turn to Gnomes
That run, leap, and cry.

They run to the corners
And creep under the walls.
Then, just after midnight
I hear their shrill calls.

They cry to be used,
But not by me.
They want to be placed
Where people can see.

I hear their cries,
The nasty, little Gnomes.
They scream at me,
"You can't write poems!"

- Brian Hyer



WAITING FOR THE SERPENT

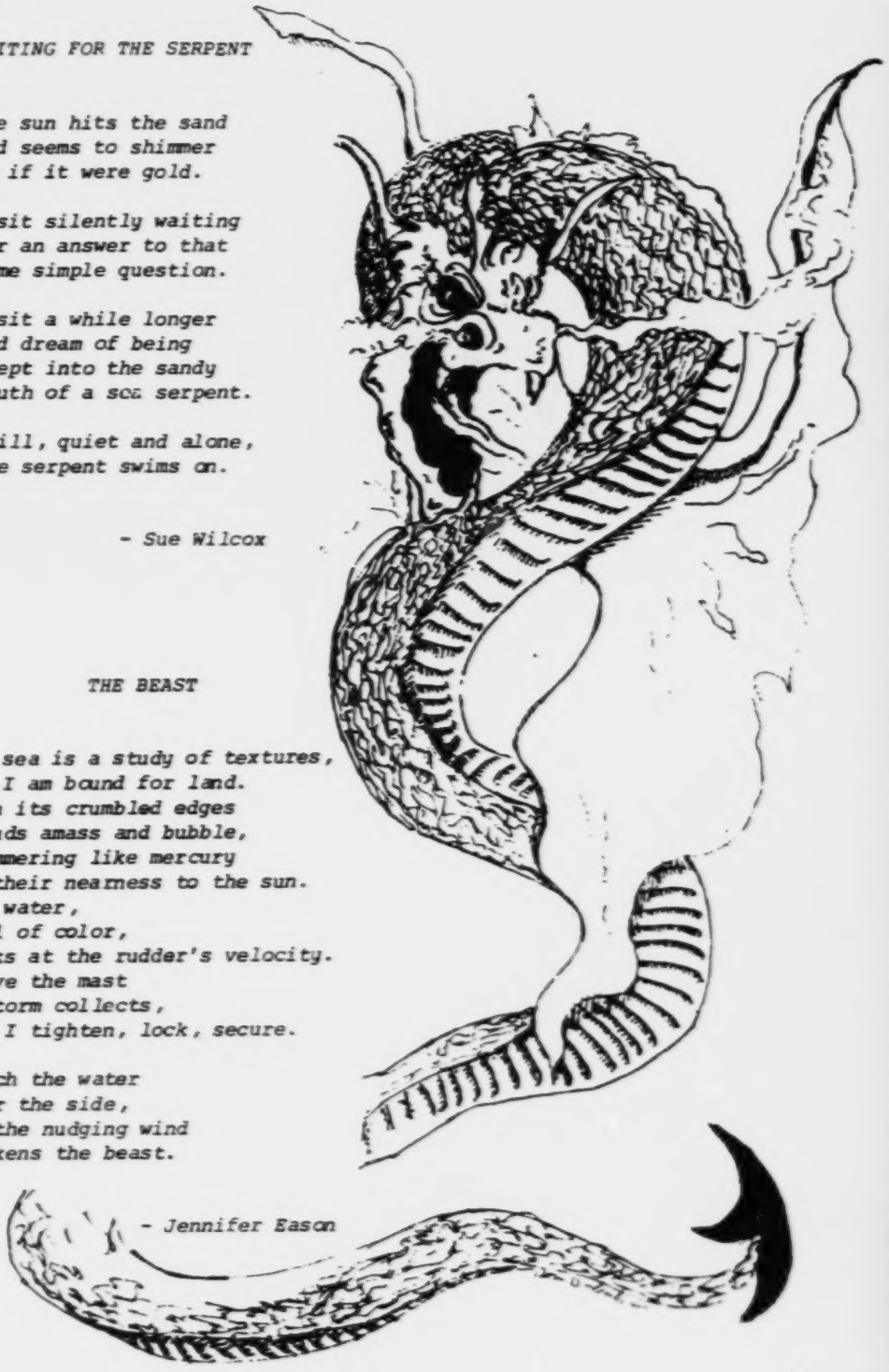
The sun hits the sand
and seems to shimmer
as if it were gold.

I sit silently waiting
for an answer to that
same simple question.

I sit a while longer
and dream of being
swept into the sandy
mouth of a sea serpent.

Still, quiet and alone,
the serpent swims on.

- Sue Wilcox



THE BEAST

The sea is a study of textures,
and I am bound for land.
Upon its crumbled edges
Clouds amass and bubble,
glimmering like mercury
in their nearness to the sun.
The water,
full of color,
forks at the rudder's velocity.
Above the mast
a storm collects,
and I tighten, lock, secure.

Watch the water
over the side,
as the nudging wind
awakens the beast.

- Jennifer Eason

P O O R

by Stan Smith

South America has very beautiful mountains, jungles, and beaches, but it also can be very ugly.

My first real glimpse of Cuzco, Peru, was from the balcony of our hotel room. Its stone roads wound through a maze of walls built of huge rocks. The ancient Incas had cut these rocks to fit tightly against each other like a jigsaw puzzle. There were no skyscrapers looming above, yet somehow all the stone walls and buildings shut me off from the rest of the world.

Fat Indian women, dressed in colorful robes and leather hats, roamed the streets carrying loads of pottery, blankets, and baskets. Some carried babies on their backs. There was no noise in this city. It was a silent picture.

Then came time to go to Machu Picchu, the ruins of a mountain city left behind by the Incas. We boarded the train on a very cold, damp morning. The train pulled away from the station and began to work its way uphill. As we began moving away from the city, my eyes were exposed to horror. The stone walls hadn't just shut me off from the world; they had been hiding something that surrounded me. At age eleven, I quickly learned what I had taken for granted all my life.

Children half naked and without shoes waved as the train moved past. Some carried water barrels through the mud. Their feet were bare while I tried to stay warm with a sweater and coat. Their houses were packed together like strange condominiums, leaving a yard barely big enough to stretch in. The yard consisted of lifeless, light-brown filth. Their open sewer, a stream of floating waste, stung my nose as it flowed parallel to the railroad tracks. This time I wasn't looking in a National Geographic, or watching a "Feed the Children" program on television. I was there, and it was real. I wanted to stop and give each of these families something, even just a $5 bill. But as the train climbed higher and higher, the shacks spread out further and further until they covered the world. That would be a lot of $5 bills.

* * * * *

"EAGLE" Don Dodenbier

TO EAGLES

Powerful enough to kill,
Yet gentle enough for landing
Are your calloused feet.
You hold dominion
over life.
I see
time measured
Between your talons.
I look upon you with respect.
I know your power,
and I know your fear
of death.

- Karen Packard

MIDNIGHT ESCAPE

At night I escape the grasp of earth
and dance into the midnight.
I fly through the blue winds
and tumble in the cream-filled clouds
while I absorb the moonlight
and listen to the crisp silence.

My new world has never been touched
or felt by another
Neither has its windswept heights
brought an eagle there.

Without my permission the moonlight vanishes.
My cream-filled clouds return to the box springs
and I awaken to find another day ahead of me
in a world half-heartedly trying
to reach perfection.

- Katy Frandsen

TABLE FOR FOUR

by Jani Chappell

I can hardly believe that my dad was in that room. Every time I look at that window the fact that he was there seems unreal. I wish this hospital wasn't on the way home from school. I don't like looking at it anymore. Whenever I look at that fifth floor window my stomach feels empty.

Room 501 is probably one of the best hospital rooms on that floor, or at least I think it is. The floor plan let my dad look outside. Even if the parking lot is all you can see, it is worth it. The flowers between the fresh, green ground cover give the look of an old-time rose garden with cars. It is beautiful. Even in the winter it is graceful and perfect. The snow sits even and untouched over the flower beds. I used to love the way the garden looked in the winter, but this year it is different. Now it looks like the white sheet doctors pull over patients, dead patients.

Looking back at the fifth floor window of room 501, I can feel the pit in my stomach push deeper. I wonder who is in that room now? I wonder if they are terminally ill? I wonder if they have three young children? I doubt it. It's probably some old retired man who had some unimportant operation and because of it will live another ten years.

I let out a deep sigh and watch my breath hit the air. I used to entertain myself with it. Now it only reminds me of the cold.

I glance at the snowy parking lot with the now ugly blanket of snow. I feel like one of the frozen flowers under that blanket. I wonder what death is like?

* * *

My fingers are frozen and red as I finally make it to my house. The "FOR SALE" sign in front is covered with snowy ice. I hate that ugly black and white sign; the bright orange "SOLD" sticker is even worse. I wish we could keep this house and not move tomorrow. I know I won't like my new home or my new school. I love this house too much. I always feel better when I come around the corner and see the shutter-trimmed windows looking at me. I have lived here all my life; I don't want to move now.

I open the mail box, keeping my hand on the cold metal door as I reach inside to pull out the mail. The door squeaks as I close it; it always does. I glance at the mail in my usual after-school way; at least this has never changed. It is getting cold, so I stuff the mail in my pocket and run inside. There isn't anything great, just bills.

Once inside I stop in the kitchen and throw the mail onto the

table. I can hear the radio playing upstairs. My sister is singing in her slightly off-tune voice. I begin to blow on my fingers, the cold still lingering in them. Shaking my hands, I look around the kitchen. The white brick wallpaper with the ivy drawn on it brightens the room. The yellow curtains accenting the outside light give the room a friendly glow. It used to be one of my favorite rooms. Today it is too cheery for me; I don't like it.

I leave the kitchen and start to climb the stairs. Our house is really nice. Funny how you never notice how your house looks to others, until you have to leave it. I start to climb the stairs again and can hear the off-tune singing of my sister grow louder. Her singing used to make me smile; I don't seem to care much about it lately.

My room is at the end of the hall. The worn pathway down the middle of the gold carpet makes me almost want to walk on the sides. Once in my room I toss my backpack on the floor and do my traditional jump-flop onto my bed. I look at my ceiling. The textured paint can always entertain me. I try to find pictures in it, but as everything, they change.

I like to be home after school. The house is quiet when my younger sister isn't at home. It is during this time I like to think, talk on the phone, or do whatever I feel like doing. My older sister, Jennifer, is the same way. We rarely say anything to each other after school; we just do whatever we want to.

The door rattles downstairs; Sara and Mom are home. I hear the routine "Hello is anybody home?" coming from my mother, along with the pounding feet of my sister Sara running up the stairs. I roll to the edge of the mattress and off the bed. Grabbing a comb from my dresser, I start down the stairs.

Mom is running around the kitchen getting dinner started. We used to eat at six, but for the last few months mom has started cooking at four.

I put my comb down and start to set the table. Out of habit I take five plates from the cupboard. I look down at the heavy pile, and I put one back. It never seems quite right to have only four plates. Mom sees my mistake and places her arm around me. "We'll make it Melinda. It'll be alright." My mom has said this quite a few times in the last couple of months. I think more for herself than for us. She tries to make it seem like we are still a family, but we're not, not without Dad. After we move we won't have a house to remind us of him. Nodding my head I set the table for four.

Dinner tonight is not great; Mom made hamburgers. I don't particularly care for hamburgers anymore. I used to love eating dinner; now I just rearrange my food. I sit and watch Jen eat. Slowly and carefully she munches on the soft bun. She has always eaten slowly; I guess nothing will ever change that. Sara has already finished and gone upstairs to watch television. How can she eat so

fast? How can anyone eat? We're moving tomorrow! I look at Mom; she's standing at the counter. She has eaten very little, and even when she eats, it's rarely at the table with us.

Jen taps me on the shoulder, and I hand her my uneaten dinner. When dad was alive dinners were fun. Everyone talked and laughed. Now dinners are silent. Mom always says she is thinking during dinner. She never carries a conversation anymore.

* * *

Placing my last piece of homework in my backpack I look around my room. The yellow flowered wallpaper, now free of pictures, reminds me of the change tomorrow will bring. I turn down my bed and crawl inside. The cold sheets make me feel safe. My sheets are like a flat screen protecting me from night worries. When I snuggle in my blankets, I get a warm feeling. I glance at my textured ceiling for the last time. I can't see any pictures in it tonight. I swallow hard as a pit grows in my stomach. Why do we have to leave? I close my eyes so I won't remember anything. It doesn't work. Soon I fall asleep.

* * *

The mid-morning sun is glaring in my eyes as I leave my room for the last time. As I enter the hall, everyone is running around trying to load the rest of our furniture and boxes into the moving van. I can hear Sara nagging Mom about some box and where it should go. I can't understand how Mom could actually leave this house.

I run down the stairs and take the rest of my boxes outside. Whenever I look at the moving van out in front, it only confirms the fact that we are leaving. I wonder what Dad would think about our new home.

Jen comes running out from behind the moving van. She looks like she might cry. Placing her box on the curb, she runs back inside. I think I see a tear just as she turns to go back in. I doubt it; she never cries.

The movers are walking around me and placing items too close to me. I guess I had better move. Crunching my way across the snowy lawn, I walk toward my house. I can see my breath as I exhale. It reminds me of all the neighborhood snowball fights, and how we made small igloos for Barbie dolls. I remember when my family used to have barbecues in the back yard. I remember all the holidays we spent here. At least we had one last Christmas in this house.

Now as I walk through the front door, I notice the Italian style curtains are all that's left. Out of the window I can see the tree I fell out of when I was seven. The thought brings back memories of when Dad was here.

Jennifer walks in and hands me a box. Taking it makes my hands

drop a little from the weight. Regaining my balance, I look at the black lettering on the top,"Dinner Dishes." Looking at Jen I can see she has been crying. I've never seen her quite like this.

"Take this out for me please Melinda; I can't go out right now, okay?" Jen isn't looking at me. I can't quite tell what is wrong. Jennifer has always been the one with the positive attitude.

"I just want to be inside alone, for awhile before we leave," She says. Jen is really crying! I know she won't look at me because she is so upset. I can see tears running down her cheeks; they are following the pattern begun by others.

Gently pressing my hand on her shoulder I hear myself say "Hey, don't worry. We'll be okay; we'll make it." I stop cold. I can't believe I just said that. I guess deep down inside I always knew we would. Saying it out loud just brought it to my attention. I can feel my stomach relax for the first time in quite awhile.

Turning, I leave Jen alone. I can understand her wanting to be by herself. After all, he was her dad too. Once outside I let out a deep breath and watch it hit the air. This time it didn't remind me of cold, but of all the fun I used to have here with Dad. I guess I was afraid that if we moved I would lose all those memories. I won't lose any memories; I know now that I could never forget him. Placing the box of dishes down, I am reminded to set the table for four tonight. I know from now on I'll be able to remember that better.

* * * * *

THURSDAY EVENING

the small child lies in his room
staring at his carpet
listening to voices
the noise of words
he was taught to understand
but was never taught
to understand why
some words are said

- Suzanne Mecham

WALLS

I sit behind my little wall
Peeping at the world through
tiny cracks.
I'm safe, secure, and all
alone.
By choice, not by chance,
The world is another place
That I want no part of.
Free from all the world's cares,
Behind my wall I sit
alone.
I'm afraid to go beyond and
See what living is really like.
What if sorrow and sadness should come,
Or maybe someone's death?
I don't know if I could
exist
If I had to live with that.
But as long as I sit here
I will never find
life.
I may hide from pain and
Problems that may come along,
But happiness will stay away
Along with everything else.
Maybe,
If I'm really brave,
I could tear down this
wall.
I just need the patience to
endure.
Please don't be angry if it
takes awhile--
It took many years to build.
I built my wall one brick at a time
And that's how I'll
tear it down.

- Stephanie Richards

"OLD HOUSE" (ink, 15" x 20") Don Dodenbier

THE PASSED SEASON

The chill in the air bit my nose
Leaves chased each other in a whirlwind
I looked up at the trees
Stripped of their leaves by the breeze
Except for the very few, hanging on
Not giving up
It was like that when I was young
Things were simple, and I was free
The newly fallen leaves
Formed a cushion of youth around me.

- Staci Shreeve

FRIENDS

The silver path left by the moon,
Swaying gently on the sea
Stretching far towards the horizon,
Finds the sun-capped waves
And the gold streaked ocean.
Soon the wind stirs up foam
Whipping the rain,
Beating
Thrashing

The turbulent seas,
Sending them crashing
Toward the shore in anger.
And as the moon moves high
Across the sky,
Leaving her ghostly wake
Through this troubled sea,
The wind can be heard
Howling
Whispering

Through her silver fingers,
"Your time has come."
And as the moon breathes,
Waves hasten to the shore.

- Connie Stevenson

SEA OF MY OWN

Soft gray sand
cool beneath my feet
along the watercolor coast.

Windswept waves
swirling smooth around me.

Timeless taupe sunset
soft against the edge of daylight.

Let me linger.
I cannot leave the
laughing ocean.

- Stacee Killian

"EL LARGO" (photograph, 7" x 5") Stan Smith

"WOLF" (ink. 14" x 10 1/2") Karen Packard

SURVIVAL

Four paws on crusted snow
Burning cold consumes the heart
Surrounded by the hot wires
Of hunger

- The Editors

WATER-COLORS

I dream in colors
of the blues in mountains,
the pinks of clouds
and the green of summer leaves.
I dream of the colors
which somehow become
my own life and mind.
Outside of me
the leaves are falling;
Golden light becomes brown.

- Karen Packard

SEASONED IMAGINATION

Substitute
the stinging-cold snow
with
warm, green grass,
lazy lawn chairs,
and children's wading pools.

Fade the grey fog
and in its place put
clear, blue heaven,
bright yellow sun,
and seagulls.

Trade the snow-crusted boots
for sand-covered sandals,
or run barefoot.

Splash in cool, playful waters
and shiver inside of beach towels
instead of heavy winter coats.

Come quickly, summer!

- Stacee Killian

STANDING IN A FIELD

What are these spiny bobs
Surrounded by rat-tails of bone
Abiding till they're dust
In the October fields?

What are these colors for?
Why the bright orange trees,
And why the stillness in the gray
Of approaching things?

Why the long pithy stems
Chocked in among
The still living grasses?

Why life mixed with death?
Why the green lawns and hollow trees?
Why the burning sun
And cold rock under my hand?

Most important of all.

Why the love, the love so deep
And the unrest so isolating,
The lonely, self-pulled anger?
Why the want of good
In inner times so bad?

- Brad Wooden

"BOBCAT" (scratchboard, 20" x 26") Don Dodenbier

TRIUMPH

Prideful hunters watch
to slide their bullets through flesh
of arrogant cats.

- Jennifer Eason

"SAPRANO-SAX MAN" (scratchboard, 8" x 13") Don Dodenbier

prologue

If you've ever wondered what makes the telephone ring like it does, just ringing out a single ring and then being forever silent, then maybe I have an answer for you. There is nothing more irking and tantalizing than the phone when it rings once and then no more. Of all the possible reasons and wherebys that this strange occurrence happens—and I know it's happened to you—there will always remain the possibility that it is unexplainable. It could just very well be that the story about to unfold before you is just such a case. You, I, virtually anyone who has sat in the living room and been beckoned by the unanswering tug at our yellow and blue, plastic leashes, could very well have been touched by the DECENDER, or decending thing, or decendthing, or occurrence unexplained which decends. You see, it is just walking on the edge to even lable it a "thing." I really can't think of anything to call it. When I use its name—or I should say, "the name"—I might be referring to some strange, new, natural phenomenon that just happens out of the blue. I don't know, but call it what you will; it is real; it is out there; and I know, I just know, that its going to happen to you. It will happen again, and again, and again. So when it calls, or trys to call, make the extra special effort to understand what it is, or what is immediately happening to you; because whenever it does happen—and as I have said, I know that it will—just keep your cool long enough to realize that you are in the midst of that thing I'll call decending, or the Decender, or whatever in this quickly maddening universe it is.

D E C E N D E R

by Brad Wooden

Kla-Kla-Kla-Kla-Kla-Kla-Kla-Kla-Kling-ing-ing-ing-ing.
Kla-Kla-Kla-Kla...

In a muddled and moldy little apartment, where a vista of light dawned only now and then on some obscure corner or edge of bed, and where everything else that lived in the apartment settled quite happily in its dark, undefined hole, or on its dusty, forbidden shelf frequented now and then with eight-legged travellers, the phone rang.

He sloughed off the pillow that was burying his face and picked the receiver off the phone with a preciseness that rarely daunts a human being just awakened, except when angered by a non-living nag, a phone.

He held the phone to his ear, elbows propping him up, other hand trying to get rid of the blur in his eyes.

He wasn't going to extend himself at this hour; they'd have to talk first. The wait was getting pretty long now; they hadn't said a word yet.

He swallowed, blinked, and thought he'd better take the world a little more seriously.

"Yes, I'm here!" he said, very annoyed. "Are you?"

There was a dead sound like wind rushing overhead as you might crawl, scratch, and grope your way across five miles of bear infested Yellowstone in the pitch black of night until you hit a highway. He hadn't hit it yet. The little vistas, lighted by the odd alarm clock or cracked door, were getting darker, darker, slowly darker.

"Come on!" he was whining, mad, and just a little bit scared. "Look, if you got me up, TALK!"

The earpiece stole away with a few crackles of static. The wait was longer and the silence deeper.

"Joyce?" he softened his tone a bit. "Joyce, is it you? Joyce! If you woke—if you wake—if you got me up, then please talk!"

Absolutely nothing, not the shift of a body in a chair or phone booth, not the slightest breathing or the faintest swallow, absolutely nothing came across.

He could have sworn there was a moment when his heart took three deep throbs, then skipped, then continued with a regular pulse to push out the striped cotton material over his chest.

He hung up the phone trying not to place it down hard enough to make the person who he thought was on the other end think he cared. But for Jake Williams, old Jake who had never been fooled, never been left alone without warning, Jake, who had always been such a communicator to people, who had lived and loved basking in the domain of human interactions, for old Jake Williams there had been nobody on the other end.

* * *

"Nobody!"

"That's right Mr. Williams; we could not identify the caller who you claim contacted you last night." A district phone company technical head pushed papers around on his desk and made three or four other gestures of hello or reminding to his staff in the busy office.

"I don't understand; you said you traced the call."

"Yes, well..." the technician interjected.

"But," Jake interrupted, "doesn't that mean you caught the guy, the weirdo who has been hanging the wreath of death around my place?"

"Now Mr. Williams, I don't want you to jump to any conclusions about your being harassed. This kind of complaint happens all the time and with more frequency as our telephone network gets broader and broader." With that the technical head squeaked back in his office chair and focused on a corner of the room. Jake stood in front of his desk. He looked down at the man and his desk dumbfoundedly. "What I mean by broader," the technical head said, "is that with these computer people getting in here and tying things up, it's just not an easy pen to keep under wraps."

Jake began to open his mouth to ask a question, to interrupt. The technical head continued anyway.

"Now, I'm not trying to justify problems with our system with a lot of excuses. They're very real problems that you," the technician slowed down and tried to cajole Jake with smooth understanding (everyone here at Bell wants your phone to work just swell) kind of talk, "and I just have to live with until we have the capacity to police the system like we hope we will have."

Jake backed away from the small desk. "Granted you guys have a lot on your hands with all the..." He was again interrupted.

"Ya," the head replied, "these computer people just don't know what to leave alone." The man thumbed at a stack of sheets to his right. "They get in here and foul up the whole works, and then they get off scott free. Somewhere in there, there's bound to be a switch misthrown, or an override that just by chance knocks at your door." The head was finished.

"So to speak," Jake ended.

"If you feel that you're having the same problem with another call," the head stood up from the cramped desk, "just hang up the phone and that's that. We're trying."

While the technician headed out of the office, Jake straggled by his side with a pleasantly achieved, lighter mood about the whole thing.

"It's just that I could've sworn there was someone there on the other end listening back."

"Well, I don't know about that, but if our record is correct which I'm positive it is, then nobody called you last night, and you were linked up to nothing more than a lot of cold hardward."

The technician stopped at the door to see Jake down the other end of the hallway, before getting on with his work.

"Cold hardware?" Jake asked.

"Our machine is being trashed around by any one of 500 microcomputer jockeys in this city." The head swung his arm out toward the city window at the end of the hall; midday sweat inched down his hammy mug.

"Thanks for your time." Jake farewelled the techi.

The technician head kept rambling, "They must think they're all a bunch of cowboys or something..."

Jake fazed out of the Bell Building. He fazed down the hall. He fazed his way down the pebble-caste, mod-design, suspended steps. While being fazed by a thrumming, brushed aluminum hand rail, he fazed his way through the front doors, and as the panic bars rebounded, he wondered, "Why the panic bars?"

* * *

"I don't understand it," Jake said to his friend. His friend was quiet and let Jake bury him with a ton of spiel and rhetoric. "The guy told me that no one called me last night, but my phone rang." Jake's eyes widened; he ended the phrase with an uneasy pondering lilt. "I heard little jinglings." Jake turned to the coffee maker in the apartment; he poured a cup. "I woke up." Jake still jabbed his friend with questioning lears. "I picked up the phone," Jake hesitated, put his hand to his forehead then let it fall with a slap to his leg, "and I swear I've never felt so eerie in my whole life." His friend's silence showed Jake that he didn't know what to think. Jake slurped the coffee suddenly and loudly. The friend backed into a pan on the wall, and it fell to the kitchen floor.

"I have a friend who might be able to help you." Jake's friend had the beginnings of a smile on his face, one destined for full blown laughter.

"Ya, who?" Jake was drawn.

"Don't get me wrong," his friend tittered.

"What's wrong with you?" Jake rolled his eyes and spoke softly, inquisitively.

His friend exploded in laughter, clenching his gut and moving out toward the living room. "it's...it's...," his friend gasped. "It's just that you're being not exac...exac..." his friend roared muffled screams and howls into the couch pillow.

"I'm being stalked by a crazed," Jake moved around to face his laughing friend, "psychopathic," Jake picked up a sofa pillow to bludgeon his friend back to soberness, "deGENERATE," Jake whomped his friend over the head. His friend couldn't breathe now and was loving every minute of it. "And am being coaxed out the window by someone so insanely genius," Jake hit him twice, "that they can hypnotize me into

who knows what over a stupid telephone!" Jake's friend was now more sober, and glad to be breathing again.

"I...I just think you ought to talk to a guy over at the school who has the same problem." His friend wiped his eyes and pinched his nose.

"What, this guy gets the same stuff?"

"Ya, Ya, says he swears it feels like Heaven itself is on the other end."

"Oh, a nut!" Jake threw his hands up in the air. "Just who I need helping me, a freakn' nut!"

"No," Jake's friend said. "Not a nut."

"Not a nut, huh?" Jake looked back to his friend sitting on the couch. "Swears he's talking to Heaven, huh?"

"Well," his friend compromised, "a religious nut then." His friend started again, grabbed his side and stopped himself, just in time, from a second asphixiation.

"Oh, religion and me make you laugh?" Jake sounded like he had caught on to Dr. Fu Man Chu.

"Just go and talk to him; it can't do anything except convince you of how silly you're acting."

* * *

"The phone will ring until you pick it up, or it will only ring once?" Ed Barney, the man Jake's friend had been referring to, diagnosed Jake's problem. Jake and Barney sat across from each other at the end of a long wooden table. Barney wasn't getting any answers from Jake. Jake sat day-dreaming and disturbed, silenced by weeks of visitation on his phone by something he had no idea about.

Jake broke out of his daze. "Ah, it will ring until I pick it up, and then nothing happens."

"Nothing happens?" Barney rehashed the statement, "You mean no one is talking on the other end. Don't you?"

Jake's eyes were cold and seedy; he looked ill and disturbed. "Sure, no one is talking, but I know someone is there; something is there anyway."

"I don't doubt that for a minute Mr. Williams." Barney gave Jake the utmost look of confirmation and alliance.

"What, you believe me?"

"Mr. Williams, let me tell you a few things that have made people around here think I'm nuts, okay?" Barney paced before Jake. "Mr. Williams, do you have any idea of how often your complaint is heard by the phone company?"

"They tell me a lot."

"Exactly right, but that's not all. Do you know what single issue the United Sates Postal Service's lawyers have to contend with above anything else?"

"What?"

Barney clasped his hands together at the fingers, put his elbows down on the table, and looked straight faced into Jake's eyes. "The U.S. Postal Service receives hundreds upon hundreds of complaints each year from people who claim negligence and mishandling of their mail. They make claims outrageous enough to actually blame the postal service for tampering and censoring their mail."

"What does this have to do..."

"Now let me finish. It's very serious for a government, which prides itself on liberties and such, to be having inner conflicts of censorship accusations. People out there really think they're being ripped-off through the mail. The complaints are simple. Typically, a person will get a letter from someone they love or know. Upon opening the letter, they find nothing inside."

"I don't know what you're getting at. You do know what my problem is don't you! Have you forgotten it or something!"

"Be patient with me; you'll see the scope of this shortly." Barney continued, "The people might find blank pages or pieces of unintelligible scrap inside of the envelopes, but that's all. You know, the interesting thing about it all is that this was first recognized in a rural area of Nebraska where the mail was handled by a close group of local people."

Barney was hypnotizing Jake with a story Jake could almost feel the ending to. Barney rolled the carpet of facts out to Jake without end. "A little girl had received a letter from an idol she had written to." Barney paused, "I think it was Sean Casidy, anyway, for the size of the town it wasn't hard to see why everyone got in on it. I mean it's quite a big deal, hearing from a celebrity and all, for some of these people. It was a very direct looking letter judging by the way it was addressed to the girl in handwriting instead of typing. They really expected the letter to be genuinely that of Casidy's, and not a form letter. When they found nothing inside except for some old recipe carbons, they suspected someone had stolen the letter. For some of the fans that idolize these celebrities, a real letter would be well worth stealing. They reported it and thought that it could be run down locally since the only people who would take time to notice such a

letter would be carriers or back-store mail handlers. They found the culprit alright, but they found a whole lot more than that. It all boiled down to matching the handwriting on the letter to that of an old lady who worked in a local drugstore. She even knew the little girl. The match was undeniable, and even the old lady admitted it was her handwriting. The lady was shocked and upset. She realized how cruel of a thing it was for her to fake a letter to the little girl, but she held true on her heart that she didn't remember doing it, and that she had no explanation of how her handwriting wound up on the letter.

"The recipe carbons--the carbons left in the envelope--that would prove it!" Jake excitedly brought in.

"Yes," Barney smiled, "that's what did the little old lady in, but she cried so much that they let her off the hook and accounted it all to her aging and senility. Duplicate recipes were found in a desk drawer where the lady worked."

"Was she just trying to liven up the little girl's fantasies," Jake said, "with a little harmless forgery?"

"They all thought that, and then they thought about the carbons left in the envelope that had nothing on them except garbage. They figured the lady had completely wigged-out."

"What does that have to do with this telephone thing?" Jake was almost ready to tie it all together himself. He demanded an explanation from Barney.

Barney was wiping his face with a hanky and getting more comfortable in the chair he was sitting in. He stabbed Jake with his most solemn, conversational grip of eyes. "No one who knew the old lady could believe it. They simply couldn't believe that such a healthy and well thinking woman of her age could slip so far. They knew it wasn't at all inferrable from the way the old lady acted towards them or anything. They all thought the lady had had a stroke of some kind."

"That could explain it though," Jake said.

"Not entirely, the postal service used this as a lead into more investigations of the same kind and found many parallel incidents. For some reason, Mr. Williams," Barney scanned up and down the table, "people are writing letters to other people by accident. They're subconsciously addressing envelopes, stuffing anything convenient into them, and mailing them."

"What the...?" Jake opened his eyes and sat up from the table.

"Now I think I'm going to shock you Mr. Williams." Barney said relaxed and confident.

"How in the world are you tying this garbage in with telephones and weirdos harassing people." Jake sounded enraged.

"Nobody called you," Barney said calmly.

"What!" Jake yelled.

"Didn't they tell you that at the phone company? Didn't they tell you that no addressing party had appeared on the receipts of your phone record?"

"Ya," Jake said, "they did."

"Don't you see Mr. Williams, if nobody is calling people in these weird incidents, and nobody is really writing the letters, then can't you see what's happening?" Barney started getting uptight.

"No I can't! I'm sorry, I don't get you!" Jake was hysterical.

Barney sat up in his chair, put his outstretched hands both on the table to each side of him, and spoke very softly. "Jake, that is your first name isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Jake, something...something is happening to this world. It's starting out very small and is spreading. People all over are being affected by it, just as you have been. Something has come back or has just arrived here on earth; I can't figure which. It's not some freaky alien whose going to rip out of your chest, hide in your rafters and kill your maid. It doesn't possess any kind of form that I think a human has ever been familiar with. I don't think it really has a form or that it's an it. I don't even know if it is an it. There are weird and unexplainable things going on everywhere, and these happen to follow a particular linking. Think about your own incident. Didn't you really think of one particular person who had to be on the other end of that call?"

"Yes, I did," Jake said. "I thought it was a girl I know, Joyce."

"Have you wanted her to call you for a long time?"

"Ya, I always think about her, and I wish she'd give me a call. Whenever the phone..."

"Whenever it rings you hope it's Joyce, right?" Barney asked.

"Yes."

"You see, there is something trying to compromise out there, something trying to tie together the entire library of human beckoning and want. And it's going about it all at once. Imagine it, if you will, slowly growing more keen in the duplication of reality for people that normally won't ever have that reality happen. It is amature now; it stumbles and is incapable of fully going about this very strange assignment, but who knows what might transend toward the end of this

decade—permanent peace, elimination of all disease, global unification of government..."

"What did you mean by assignment? You said it had an assignment." Jake stirred from his listening with a curious catch in his mind.

"I'm not a big one for religion Mr. Williams, but then again I'd probably not be one to believe in aviation and live right next door to the Wright brothers. If the Bible is an accurate account of ancient history--of which there is a great deal to support it--then all indications have been that God's primary manipulation of this planet ended with those dates. In other words, nobody has seen pillars of fire, parted seas, or fish just crop up out of nothing. Some think miracles just really don't happen.

"You think God is responsible for this?" Jake asked.

"No, God is not the right way to think about it. That's a word that everybody thinks they know the definition of completely, but they probably aren't even close. I think that confuses it a bit. I'm saying that something dropped out of this world a long, long time ago, and now it's trying to find its way back in. Think of it!" Barney had the look of a man almost gone crazy, he rose from the table, beads of sweat pouring off his face, his eyes wide with pressure and white. "Think of the joy, the happiness, the coming—the second coming!"

"Of God!" Jake exclaimed.

"Of whatever—whatever!" Barney walked, ran, twirled around, and left the room that he and Jake had been sitting in for two hours. Jake was exhausted. He headed home for his apartment that night convinced his friend had sent him to a bonified, super-real lunatic.

* * *

Jake's friend came over the next day to hear what he had to say about the advice he had sent him to. The phone rang; Jake and his friend stared at it apprehensively. Jake slowly walked over to it and picked it up. "Hello," Jake said into the receiver. His friend was observing with itching interest. "Oh! Thank Heaven," Jake immediately said right after. "No, no, never mind; it's just that I'm glad it was actually someone calling me for a change." Jake explained his odd reaction to having someone on the other end of the phone. His friend smiled and turned away to the window.

Jake's face went blank all of a sudden; it just dropped from ten feet high and went blank. He swallowed. "Your not serious!" Jake's voice was cracking like tension put on a bow saw. "Oh please, please no." Jake collapsed to the floor, cross legged, tears welled in his eyes and shot down his face. His friend immediately got up and went over to him. He knelt there with Jake, silent. "When...when did it happen?" Jake was barely talking now. "Oh no! I can't believe it...I just can't believe it..." Jake dropped the phone and let it wig and wag through the shag carpet on its curly yellow leash.

"Tell me Jake?" his friend asked softly.

Jake gathered himself a little and said, "Joyce is dead." It ended with a dry whisper.

"How?"

"She...she was in a car wreck yesterday. They had tried to reach me before...but the phone was always busy...you know..." They both looked coldly at the phone. It screamed back a muddled, off-the-hook tone. Jake's friend killed it.

* * *

Kla-Kla-Kla-Kla-Kla-Kla-Kla-Kla-Kla-Kla-Kling-ing-ing-ing-
Kla-Kla-Kla-Kla-

"Hello, yes, who is it?" Jake asked through his partly cleared throat. It was two weeks after her funeral and it was early in the morning.

"Hi baby," a girlish voice came wonderfully across the small speaker.

"Yes...who..." Jake paused in full disbelief.

"Don't worry Jake. I love you! I love you so much." There was a sad and happy sigh. "I wanted to call, but don't think about that now." Jake was, by choice, paralized. "I was so silly, I shouldn't have been a lot of ways. I miss you so much. I love you. Things are much better now, better than you could believe. I'll come see you soon. I love you. It won't be long. We'll be together. you'll see. I love you..."

* * * * *

ASPIRIN USUALLY WORKS

Hard Rock
Gray Sky
Blue Shirt
and buttered popcorn at the movies.
Carefree surfers on the ocean
wear wild beach shorts
while fat dieters
Struggle
to gain prestige on New York's Broadway.
Beautiful models find
foolish boys, and
God creates miracles
when babies are born
Into this
Jealous
Suicidal
World
where the Wizard of Oz
is playing on stage,
and people have Headaches
they can't seem to get
Rid of.
Why does the sidewalk
Crack
when carefree children
chant rhymes
of mothers' broken back?
"Oh, the doctor is out"--
watching long legs and bikini's.
But
the Green Curtain
continues to get Black
as the Fire of time and space
covers Satan's window
And we seem to Move nowhere.

- Ruth Giles

THE IRON CURTAIN

I had a dream
They replaced it with propaganda
I caught a glimpse of freedom
They blocked my sight with walls of pain
I saw the beauty of individuality
They issued uniforms
I heard the voice of liberty
They shattered it with static
I merely exist
They call it living
I have a dream
They call it treason

- Brian Hyer

THE BUBBLE OF ME . . . NEXT EXIT

I want to have a simple life,
one of no concern or worry.
I want to live in a vacuum
in which nothing every changes
except for the better.
I want to decide and control
what IS better.
I want to have two decisions:
regarding myself
and regarding everyone else.
I want to FEEL liked,
and I want to BELIEVE
that everyone else is enjoying
my dream.
I have a selfish dream.
I want the world to live
in The Bubble of Me,
and I want them to be
relieved to come home.
They'll see the signs
and breathe a conventional
sigh of relief.
The green plate reads:
The Bubble of Me...Next Exit.
I have a selfish dream.

- Matthew M. Price

LIGHT

Light is a warrior
Who captures the monsters under my bed
And beats them 'til I fall asleep

Light is a gremlin
Who flickers in the corner of my eye
As he scampers around my room.

Light is a bomb
Its timer is set
In correspondence with the alarm on my clock.

Light is a razor
Keen-edged and cutting
That shaves away the darkness of the night.

- Mike Jensen

REVENGE

The shining sword
Stings
As it slides
Through my
Stiffened body
To be left there
Burning my blood.

- Denise Charlesworth

ZODIAC

The shadows of life
The ways of people
Lost even to themselves
The placement of Sagitarian
Warriors
The open wariness
Of the Aquarian guards
Who are often fooled
By the beautiful face
Of the lonely Virgo.

- Andrew Braunberger

IF WE WERE FROGS
(not about frogs)

Gliding down a warm stream
Through the mist and steamy leaves
We would pass unending days
In blissful rounds of silent staring
At each other never caring.

If we were frogs.

Forever and for what it matters
We would listen to rain that patters
Down from an unheard of sky
Upon the low leaf shrubbery by
A lake or hidden glade
Passing in and out of broken shade
From clouds coming?
From clouds going?
We would sit there never knowing.

If we were frogs.

I would sit
Watch sweat beads rise
From the spongy, green skin,
Between your eyes,
Pulled taut across
Those two black spheres
That bare no windows
And shed no tears.

If we were frogs.

- Brad Wooden

"LEOPARD" (ink 11 1/2" x 8 1/2") Karen Packard

THE CONTROLLER

Patience is the Leopard,
Eyes like the coals of fire;
Climbing, he ascends even higher.
Patience waits to pounce.

Every muscle holds back
The Leopard; with ultimate control,
He waits.

Nervousness is the boar under the tree.
Eyes jerk with epileptic motion
Twisting, turning;
Nervousness screams with terror.

Patience overwhelms.

- Mark Wecker

TO A HOUSEWIFE

Cherry-pink and orange-orange sunsets and
Stick-on-your-face bubble gum
Pretty little trains puffing around the petting zoo, and
Sitting in chairs that creak and rock and creak
Chalk-marked hopscotch on the sidewalk and
Thrilling games of Truth-or-Dare.
All these things have given way to
Dishwater hands and
Credit-card bills,
Charming the clients your husband brings home and
Checkbook balancing.
Oh, how you must want to just play jumprope again.

- Lynda Scritchfield

FISHERMEN AND FAIRIES

Soldiers
and flashing lights
determine to destroy
the fishermen of
Amsterdam
who forgot their poles
when childhood
deserted them.
Soldiers
fight off waves
of nonsense and beer
while moss
shelters their memory
of white pink-eyed bunnies
who steal into the
garden next door
to beat the field mice
and meet the fairy princess
to nibble on the soldiers hat
while the soldier naps.

- Jennifer Eason

CATERPILLARS TRAINS AND ME

Trains like
caterpillars
crawl
along adjoining
stems
stopping to rest and
take in a meal
then pulling away
leaving nothing behind
but the paths
by which they came.

- Stan Smith

LA NIEVE

La nieve, esas hermosas bolitas de algodon
que descienden del cielo
como si fuesen unos ángeles
en un avión,
atraviesan el cielo
como unos rápidos jinetes
que tienen prisa
por llegar a la tierra.
Llegan en una dulce brisa
a esta tierra
de paz y amistad,
de amor y bondad,
pero solo se encuentra
con un mundo
que no sabe, que no encuentra
su felicidad.
Esa felicidad
que todas añoran
y gue no consiguen,
solo encuentran su infelicidad.
no son como la nieve,
ella se forma,
desciende en una
gloria celestial
como un Dios.
Llega a la tierra
donde reposa,
duerme y desaparece
tan misteriosamente
como cuando apareció.

- Juan Miralles

E L R E F L E J O

by Carlos Saucedo

Allí estaba pensando en una hacienda mirando por una parte de la ventana. Bajaba la nieve del cielo, hacía frío afuera y yo estaba adentro muy calentito. De repente mi imaginación se fue de mí y un reflejo de mi padre apareció en la ventana. Desde ese momento no supe nada. Sentí como si yo hubiera estado con él en ese momento. En mi pensamiento, sentí como si hubiera ido con el afuera a jugar. Tirábamos bolas de nieve unos a otros, mi padre estaba conmigo en un equipo, y mis hermanos grandes en otro. Después de un rato afuera, la nieve bajaba más fuerte. En ese momento, se vino una tormenta. Antes de meternos en la casa, mi padre y mis hermanos me tiraron en la nieve. Cuando nos metimos adentro, sentí el calor de la casa. Nos metimos en la cocina y mi madre nos dio chocolate caliente. Esperamos que la nieve se detuviera un poquito más. Salimos de la casa otra vez para sentir el frío de afuera, y todo el calor se quedó adentro. Mi madre nos miraba por la ventana, en ese momento me limpié las lágrimas, y cuando levanté la cabeza para sequir en lo que estaba pensando, vi en un reflejo de la ventana el sepulcro de mi padre. Cuando miré esto, sentí tristeza en mi corazón. En este reflejo, vi a mi madre llorando junto al cajón donde estaba mi padre muerto. Estaba cayendo nieve y hacía frío. Toda la familia también lloraba. Cuando yo estaba recordando esto, me salían las lágrimas. Después pense en todo los días que él y yo habíamos pasado felices. El retrato me vino a la mente y allí habían flores cubiertas de nieve y me miraba a la tumba llorando, con nieve cayendo y hacía mucho viento. Mi cara estaba fría y mis lágrimas se me cuajaban. Después de un rato mirando el reflejo de la ventana, no supe que el retrato de repente se había desaparecido. Mi madre estaba cerrando la ventana porque el aire frío entraba. Entonces mi pensamiento volvió a mi otra vez, me limpié las lágrimas de la cara, me puse una chaqueta, y me fui para afuera.

* * * * *

MACHO

You
So strong
So brave
So bold
You never cry
or so
I'm told
you are
so tough
I've never denied
but oh
So mushy
So gushy
inside

- Anna Keiter

EGO

"POMPOUS, ARROGANT, INSENSITIVE, SELFISH ASS!"
"probly true."
"YOU'RE SOOO RUDE!"
"yes."
"YOU'RE JUST NOT RESPONSIBLE ENOUGH!"
"oh."
"DON'T THINK YOU'RE ALONE. EVERYBODY HAS TO FIGHT SOMETHING. LIFE IS JUST ONE BIG FIGHT AFTER ANOTHER!"
"hmmm"
"YOU HAVE A HUGE EGO AND IT'S BEEN HURT A COUPLE OF TIMES, BUT YOU HAVEN'T LEARNED ANYTHING. BEFORE YOU WILL BE ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING WORTHWHILE, YOUR EGO WILL HAVE TO BE HURT QUITE SEVERLY."
"oh."

- Steve Masur

MY LOVER, MY FRIEND

Fun wasn't always kissing goodnight
It was holding a hand and squeezing it tight
Fun wasn't blowing in each other's ear
It was watching a game and drinking rootbeer
Fun wasn't being alone in the dark
It was making lunch to eat in the park
Fun wasn't an evening drinking champagne
It was sitting together outside in the rain
Now fun is thinking back on our life
The things before he made me his wife
We kept our promise of rules not to bend
He's not only my lover, but he is my friend.

- Denise Charlesworth

EXPERIENCE

The way he turns,
The way he gives me words
To go to sleep with,
Did he inherit moments
From other times,
Another face
Or mind?
Surely he must have learned
How to love me
By loving someone else.

- Karen Packard

I, THE SPIDER

by Matthew M. Price

I rolled from my side onto my back and stared at the aging-white ceiling for awhile. I watched a cobweb blow with the circulating air and observed a spider tiptoeing across a beam. I found this entertaining enough for another hour. Anything that made me forget was entertainment.

The spider struggled to make his living--killing. He wove intricate designs into his attractive death net. The web was strung across the corner of a western window and was plainly visible in the evening sunlight.

The spider prowled the outside of the web inspecting his craftsmanship. I watched the spider return to the center of the web and snuggle in. He didn't move again.

The web was beautiful in its finished form. I felt sorry for the spider, though, because I knew this was his only goal in life. If this web were to remain intact, he would probably never leave.

A web is a terrible place to be stuck—not in the sense of the prey, but in the sense of the spider. The spider can walk around the web and over the crossroads of the web and to the center, but he can never leave. If he does, he is risking everything.

I felt for the spider in a way, and I wondered what kind I was. I was caught in a web of my own design. I had cut off my exits, and no help was on the way.

At that point the spider became too upsetting for me. I leaned over the side of the bed and turned on the black-and-white TV on my nightstand. The television ran through show after show, but I wasn't really paying attention. I had seen them so many times; I knew the words before they were said. How come on TV, problems are solved in half an hour, an hour maximum?

My problems seemed to be reruns in major syndication.

The prime-time shows were about to start, so I turned off the television. They're all phoney anyway. I rolled onto my back again and grabbed my head. I heard discordant voices and situations, and I could almost see it all. My head throbbed even worse than before as I pressed my hands together in a futile attempt to squeeze it all out.

I wanted to cry, but I couldn't. I wanted to cry it all out, but I just couldn't.

I unconsciously reached for my stereo to turn on some soothing music, but the machine was gone. I gazed up at the two lifeless speakers and a lonely dustcover. I remembered it was in the shop. One more thing was all I needed.

The dusk was settling in, and the light was escaping from my room. I could barely make out the spider's outline. I looked at my closet; the sliding door was open. The indistinct shapes and shadows resembled a possible rockslide. I didn't have to see the clothes on the floor; I knew they were there.

I got out of bed and was on my way to the kitchen when I heard a paper crumple followed instantly by plastic cracking underneath my left shoe. I picked up a piece of junk mail, just one example of the trash scattered about my room. Under it I found the remains of a cassette box. I didn't feel like eating any longer.

I lay back down and stared into the darkness. I didn't know what to do. I was so mad that I started to pull my hair. I stopped after I had hurt myself; I became even madder. The frustration and pain together were just too much and a small tear formed in each eye. There was not enough salty emotion to even roll down my face. I wanted the release of tears, but I couldn't let go enough. I just lay still and listened to the cars go by. I didn't know what to do. Nothing helped. I just had to live with it.

I didn't even know what I wanted. Did I want people to feel sorry for me, or to kick at me so I'd have a reason to hate them? I thought about the spider again. Everybody hated him. I even hated him beause he reminded me of me.

I wanted to scream, but then thought, I'm too mature to do that. I looked into the darkness and thought, this is a disgrace. I'm not sure if I meant my disgusting room or my life. At that point I just gave up trying to decide which.

My problem was life—a disease with no cure save death. I quickly ruled out death as a viable alternative. I wouldn't do it because I would feel cowardly. Besides, I'd have wasted all the nice things people had done for me. All their efforts would have been for nothing. The idea was romantic, but stupid when I stopped to think about it.

I'm too intelligent to believe my problems are unique, but why do I feel so alone? Why do I feel as though no one could possibly help me? Why can't I talk to anyone? Is this all a test from God? Is there a God? Is this God all-knowing and all-loving? Then why aren't my prayers answered? Why me?

My now splitting headache forced me up. I sat on the edge of my bed and felt with my palm the heat radiating from my face. I jumped over to where the spider was sleeping. My hand shattered his

craftsmanship and the window behind it. I winced at the pain as the blood ran down my fist. There in the faint moonlight, I thought I saw the spider moving out in the alley below. I couldn't even kill a spider.

* * * * *

AGING

At the entrance door
I stand
I've come too far to turn around
Yet
The door is dark and
As I linger in the doorway
I shiver
Gathering strength
I step one foot forward
First, I see
A mirror
I shy away and run back
To the door
I swiftly close it for
Yet
Another day

- Becky Bergeson

"GRANDMOTHER" (pencil, 9" x 11") Karen Packard

"CURIOSITY" (photograph, 7" x 5") Stan Smith

WINTER UNDER GLASS

White flakes in a bubble
Dance in the current and
Glide onto miniature deer and trees.
The glitter spills over playing children
With icy beauty and mingling motion.
Nature is in the holder's hands
To control the tiny scene with
A flip of the wrist.
The fantasy world, with its icy beauty,
Sits on a desk in front of daydreaming eyes
While I, wet and cold,
Tramp through slush.

- Stan Smith

UNWELCOME GUEST

Winter, you are an unwelcome guest
barging in
bringing visions
of sleds and snowmen, but
leaving only ice and bitter cold,
staying for what seems an eternity.

Spring, gasping for life,
struggles under your iron-fisted dominion,
but you deal her a lethal blow,
crushing her very existence.

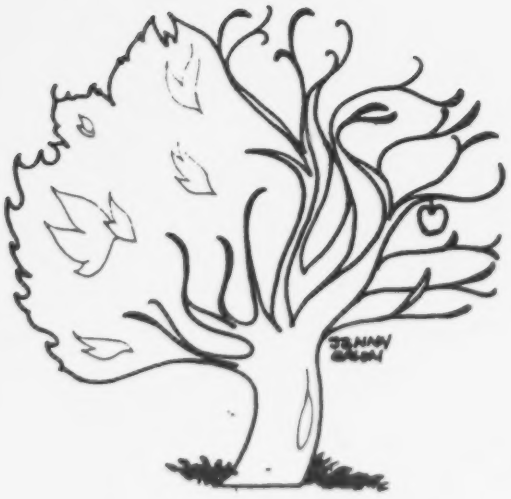
Winter, you leave,
but you are never gone;
like an unwelcome guest
you always return.

- Jeff Selander

SNOW FROM A WINDOW

Sitting here
Looking out the window,
I see the snow
fall
softly.
It touches the ground
like a fragile insect
landing quietly
on a flower,
To sit
and suck up it's pollen.

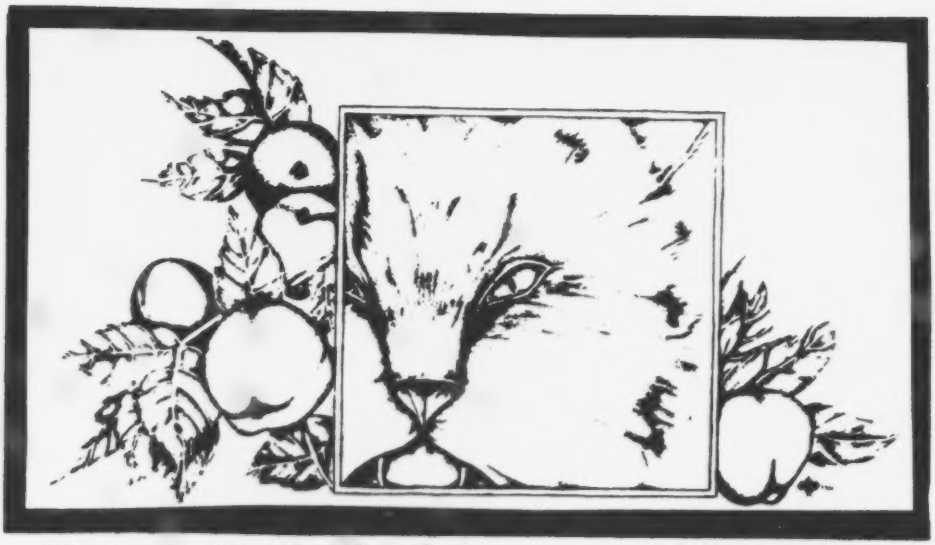
- Marie Gibson



APPLE TREE

You stood on the top of the plush, green hill,
Friends danced around you
and partook of your fruit,
and you were happy.
But as the bitter chill came from the North,
your golden leaves curled at your feet
and rustled in the wind.
We watched your branches become barren, and your arms grow old.
Now you shudder in the cold
and the lonliness of winter.
You stand all alone,
but we are not lonely in the orchard.

- Katy Frandsen



"CAT'S EYE" (pencil, 16" x 9") Don Dodenbier

ANGLE OF A CAT'S EYE

Jealousy is the bright green eyes
of a cat in the dark of night.
The eyes are only seen at certain angles,
at certain times, when you are not expecting it.

The cat is waiting patiently for you
to turn around,
to catch you at the right angle.

The one thing is, you never know
when jealousy will creep up from behind
to silently stare you in the face.

- Marie Gibson

"ELK" (pencil 19" x 13") Kenny Spencer

THE SUN SET FOR ME

The color
poured from heaven
oozing down
between the ragged cracks
in great slabs of autumn-colored rock.

The sky
painted bright
with a fire-scorched brush--
an intense display of blazing streaks.

The mountains
line the edge of earth
as a paper
hurriedly torn,
but still, formed with such great care.

- Kim Davis

ODE TO A STUPID DOG

Stupid dog
popping out of nowhere
to chase my car
when I go by.
You enjoy scaring
me sick--
you mangy mutt.
One of these nights
I'm gonna jump out
and kick you in your
fat, barking face--
you lousy canine.
Then if you persist,
I will blast off your head
as you nip at my wheels--
you spastic hound.
Furry mongrel
lying mutilated and rotting
in a puddle of crusted blood
on the roadside,
you finally caught one
didn't you?
You stupid dog!

- Stan Smith

TRAPPED

I am angry and adamant
You twist and tangle my words
Weaving a web of lies
To use against me.

I become quiet and quiescent
Giving in to your cruel games
You wear a cunning smile
You have won.

- Oksana Gogosha

WRITING POETRY

I think writing poetry is harder
than eating stone off a pavement plate.
When you read what you have written,
it makes about as much sense
as walking upside down.
When you rely on poetry to
open up your mind,
(As we all do)
Then we must be like a bird
flying to a tree long gone home.

- Victoria Harris

FUTURE TOWNHOUSE

In a sewer pipe
is where I live
The land is small
the cities too big.

The walls are rounded
the space is small
Here's where I live
in a concrete hall.

No education
exists today
No room for learning
in any way.

Too many people
sitting around
In concrete sewers
our Future Home Town.

- Jani Chappell

T W I S T E D T H O U G H T S

by Mark Wecker

Sitting peacefully on the cold kitchen floor, Robert quietly listens to the soft melancholy purr of the small, black kitten. He rubs it with gentle strokes behind the ears. Such a peaceful animal, pacing quietly back and forth, pleading for more attention. It's too peaceful. So peaceful that Robert's insides burn as a scream builds up then fades into darker, colder levels of his heart.

"Everything is so twisted. Why isn't it upset? How can you be so calm?" mutters Robert in a low cutting voice. The edges of his lips reach back for his ears, his teeth left gleeming in the narrow ray of light.

The walls, off in the distance, give the light a fog-like appearance as it rests peacefully on Robert.

Lifting the small black kitten, Robert holds it's soft young body against his own, ever so carefully so as not to scare it.

Reaching over the counter, fingers rap tightly around the cold, silver switch; Robert lifts it upward.

The blender blade shines in the light as it picks up momentum. The blade disappears as quickly as it spins under the soft furr-covered mass. The whir of the motor still purrs gently on.

* * *

"No!" Robert jerks himself up as the chills go up his brain and the sweat runs down his back. The sweat leaps back and forth trying with violent motions to leave the skin's clammy surface.

Searching with his eyes, Robert leans peacefully back on the wall of the barn-wood shack. Tear shaped raindrops fall through the broken roof and gently hit the hard, dirt floor. Darkening it with their lives, they disappear into the earth.

Starting a conversation with himself Robert mutters, "Someday, do you think they will go?" After a long pause in his thoughts, he says, "I'm talking to myself, I can't let the little scabs get to me."

Staring sensitively ahead, Robert examines the shack which is made up of an old, rickety roof spanning out, trying, and barely reaching the rough ill placed boards of the walls. The kitten sits peacefully on the mat licking Robert's hand and giving more and more attention to

the uncaring human who sits relaxed in the open doorway.

"Hey boy!" says a voice with the unquestionable firmness of authority, "Open up!"

Being very irritable, Robert replies "Eat Black death and Die!"

Paying no attention to this comment, the man approaches the doorway; the smell of detergent drifts from his well pressed, slightly damp uniform. He asks, "Do you have anything for the People's Social Democratic Regime?"

"Can't say that I do." Robert replies, as the edge of his lips creep upward.

"You better be careful boy; we might have something to charge you with."

"So," replies Robert.

The man's eyes fix on Robert and try to burn a hole through him. "You're going to die boy!" screams the man as he unshoulders his weapon.

The kitten rubs against Robert's arm purring gently. "So."

"I'm going to kill you. How can you be so calm?"

"I don't believe you."

The bullets tear through the soft skin of the kitten. "Now you!"

* * *

"No!" Robert jerks up as the beads of sweat trickle in streams down his forehead. "I'm going to kill you first you worthless Commie! I--Who are you?"

"Hi there, have a nice sleep?" asks a man with a smile so warm you want to melt away into the misty walls that surround the bed. "Oh excuse me, my name is Dr. Younger."

"Let me explain," pleads Robert.

"OK," replied the doctor.

"I've been having these dreams about Left Wingers--stupid jerks--well anyway, as I was about to say..."

"Well look," screams the doctor, "you stupid little roach. Everything you don't like you say is Left. Why don't you add up your own faults? Why don't you look at yourself? I think you're too excited. I'll get something for your nerves!"

The walls drown out all noise except for the purr of electricity in the hanging, W.W.II surplus light. The doctor leaves through the open door.

The purr is corrosive; it eats away at Robert's mind by bringing back the memory. "Help me, anyone," Robert whispers.

"I'm going to help." says the doctor. Robert turns toward the voice. The doctor stands there ever so calm, his shining needle glistening in the light. "You've had a rough time; this will help calm your nerves." He sticks the needle into Robert's vein.

"What is it?" Robert asks.

The doctor whispers with a smile, "Air."

* * *

Opening his eyes, Robert's body tries desperately to run from his spine.

Robert hears the soft melancholy purr of the small, black kitten. Robert rubs it with gentle strokes behind the ears. Such a peaceful animal, pacing quietly back and forth, pleading for more attention.

"How can you be so calm?"

* * * * *

ARM PIT

You hairy animal
you hide underneath my shoulder
until I'm ready to shoot
and as I go for a lay-up
you stare at the audience
and you scream at my opponents--
you are part of my strategy.

- Katy Frandsen

"STALLIONS" (pencil, 11" x 13") Karen Packard

TIME

swift and quiet
time runs by me
a beautiful black stallion

foolish and daring
I try to catch up to him
I should just stay still

when the moment is right
time will come to me
then we will run together

- Kelly Petersen

71

AT&T SAVED MY LIFE ONE DAY

Sitting alone
In my room
I scream
And beat
The Offending Walls
Furious
Just because
You left me,
A burned-out Lightbulb.

Letter writing
Never appealed much
To me.
Paper bridges
Disintegrate
Too quickly.

I've tried some
Fruit from
Other trees,
But I find it
Makes me feel
Not too good.

The calendar is
Depressing
Now, as
Days go by
And days
Marked in Red
Arrive.
So, I pick up
The phone
And Reach Out And
Touch You.

- Lynda Scritchfield

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